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Letter dated 16 April 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I wish to draw your attention to a grave act of aggression perpetrated along Israel's northern border.

Shortly after 2 p.m. (local time) this past Saturday, 14 April 2001, gunmen from the terrorist organization Hizbullah fired two Sagger anti-tank missiles at an IDF tank on patrol on the Israeli side of the Blue Line. One missile missed its target, but the other struck the front of the tank, fatally wounding an Israeli soldier, St.-Sgt. Elad Litvak.

This latest act of aggression comes amidst continuous attacks and provocations emanating from Lebanese territory since Israel's withdrawal in May 2000, a withdrawal confirmed by the Secretary-General (S/2000/590), endorsed by the Security Council (S/PRST/2000/21) and referred to in Security Council resolution 1310 (2000). Mobs regularly gather on the Lebanese side of the border to harass Israeli soldiers and civilians with rocks, Molotov cocktails and other explosives. Hizbullah has also carried out a number of more serious attacks which have resulted in the deaths of three Israeli soldiers and the abduction of three others.

This missile attack clearly violates Security Council resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978), as well as 1310 (2000) and 1337 (2001), and established principles of international law as expressed, inter alia, in the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as contained in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970. That Declaration provides that sovereignty carries a responsibility not to allow terrorist acts to be organized and prepared on one's territory, or launched from it. Lebanon's backing of Hizbullah, allowing the organization to establish an elaborate terrorist infrastructure and to launch terrorist attacks against Israel from Lebanese soil, stands in direct conflict with resolution 2625 (XXV) and international norms.

Saturday's attack was confirmed, in a statement issued today by the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Southern Lebanon, to be both an infringement of resolution 425 (1978) and a violation of the Blue Line. Israel has repeatedly drawn the attention of the international community to this ongoing series of violations in letters dated 16 February 2001 (A/55/792-S/2001/142), 6 February 2001 (A/55/767-S/2001/111), 26 November 2000 (S/2000/1121), 23 October 2000 (S/2000/1011), 19 October 2000 (S/2000/1002) and 7 October 2000 (S/2000/969).

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The State of Israel holds the Governments of Lebanon and Syria directly responsible for this latest act of aggression. Despite the repeated urgings of Israel and other voices in the international community, the Government of Lebanon has consistently failed to fulfil its obligations under resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent Security Council resolutions with regard to the restoration of international peace and security and the return of its effective authority in the area.

The Syrian Government's support of Hizbullah, and its permitting of overland arms transfer from Iran to Hizbullah through Syrian territory, has directly enhanced the capability of the organization to launch deadly attacks against Israel. Syria also allows Hizbullah to maintain terrorist training facilities in the Syrian-occupied Bekaa Valley and supports and encourages the organization's terrorist campaign against Israel.

Israel calls upon the Governments of Syria and Lebanon to comply with accepted standards of international law, to uphold Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and subsequent relevant resolutions of the Security Council, to ensure the return of the effective authority and presence of the Government of Lebanon throughout the south, to proceed with a significant deployment of the Lebanese armed forces, and to work to restore international peace and security.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative